

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Community Care Licensing Division
Northern California Children's Residential Program
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**OUT-OF-STATE ANNUAL REVIEW****RITE OF PASSAGE**

2560 Business Parkway, Minden, Nevada 89423
Silver State Academy, 100 Rosaschi Road, Yerington, Nevada

FACILITY VISIT DATES: June 20 – June 21, 2005

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES STAFF MEMBER:

Kathy Bakke, Licensing Program Analyst

PURPOSE OF VISIT:

Rite of Passage/Silver State Academy is seeking recertification with the State of California, Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, Out-of-State Certification Unit. The purpose of this visit is to verify facility compliance with California Licensing Standards so that this facility can accept and treat California Youth.

The Qualifying House in Minden, Nevada was also visited.

CALIFORNIA PLACING AGENCIES:

California counties that are currently placing children with Rite of Passage (ROP) are Los Angeles, Santa Cruz, San Jose, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Sonoma, Santa Clara, Alameda, San Francisco, and Lassen.

States other than California that place with ROP are Utah, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Indiana, and Nevada.

FACILITY & PHYSICAL PLANT OVERVIEW:

Rite of Passage/Silver State Academy is located on the Yerington Paiute Indian Reservation, five miles from Yerington, Nevada. The facility is situated on approximately 21 acres; ROP leases this land from the Paiute Tribe. It is licensed by the Yerington Paiute Indian Tribe (YPT); the capacity is 225, the current census is 144, and 81 boys are from California. ROP recently purchased approximately 154 acres adjacent to the Reservation. The run course is on the new property and there are plans to develop this land, which will include a horse program.

There are several buildings on the site. Unity and Justice Halls house 48 students each, the Grad Hall houses 56 students and Legend Hall, which is in the process of renovation, will house

24. Legend Hall is scheduled to open during the third week of July. School is held in Liberty Hall and the Concerns Program is in Freedom Hall. There is a large kitchen/dining hall where students can take culinary arts, a library, and an administration building.

There is a soccer field, a football field, and baseball diamond; there is a track for running, a gym and basketball court, weight room, and boxing/wrestling ring. There is also a movie room, a resource room, a computer science room, a horticulture building, and a vocational building where students learn welding, construction and auto mechanics. There are additional out-buildings for storage.

In July, 1999 California Department of Social Services granted waivers for the use of school and athletic uniforms and special event clothing to be worn by all students; bunk beds; comparable shelving space in lieu of drawers; and more than two to a room provided the local licensing agency requirements regarding bedroom space is maintained. Some of the bedrooms on the site have four to a room.

The Qualifying House in Minden, Nevada was visited on 6/20/05. There are presently six boys in the home; three boys are from California. A Qualifying House (QH) is comparable to California's Transitional Housing. The concept of the QH was developed to assist students to become self-sufficient. A boy may be placed from Silver State into a qualifying house if he has no home or foster home. There is 24-hour staff supervision; however, the students are expected to do things for themselves, they are held accountable and responsible, and have more freedom to move about the community to work or go to school, and to pursue their long-term goals.

EMERGENCY DISASTER PLAN:

ROP staff and students stated that facility wide disaster drills are conducted at least twice a year. Staff was reminded to continue to keep documentation of drills on file for review.

FIRE CLEARANCE:

In the August 2004 certification review report, California Licensing staff noted that a fire inspection had been conducted on December 3, 2003. The fire inspection documented that "a fire storage tank and new well shall be built on adjacent land by July 1, 2004." During this visit Mr. Howell explained that although they were granted an extension to July 1, 2005, they sought a second opinion. A second fire inspection was conducted on January 26, 2005, by Inn-Spec Home Inspection Services. The inspector determined that an additional water tank and well were not necessary, and that the existing pumps and water supply meet the requirements for the structure and size of the property. The safety exit plans were also approved. This inspection did require corrections including replacing inoperable smoke alarms and detectors, replacing cover switches, fixing and adjusting several doors, fixing inoperable outlets, installing more exit signs, and fixing inoperable ground fault circuit interrupters. Mr. Howell stated that all corrections have been made with the exception of two doors that still need more adjustment as they still stick.

A follow-up call was made to the second fire inspector after the certification review. He reiterated information provided by Mr. Howell, that an additional water tank and well are not required at this time. He stated that the safety exit plans are approved, and that the maintenance crew began making corrections as soon as he noted them. He is aware that approximately 150 acres of adjacent land has been purchased, and changes will be made when development begins.

LOCAL STATE LICENSING/COMPLAINT ISSUES:

The annual visit to ROP by the YPT was conducted on April 15, 2005. The report was reviewed during this certification visit. Some of the staff files that were reviewed did not include documentation of qualifications and experience and there was no documentation of interview records. Some of the students' files were missing documents such as placement agreements, personal rights forms and treatment plans. ROP was also cited for having no privacy doors or curtains on individual bathrooms located in the Graduation Hall.

The plan of correction was submitted to the YPT on May 13, 2005. It was reviewed during the certification visit.

Contact was made with one of the YTP Licensing Officers, Stacy Stahl. She stated that she had received and accepted the plan of correction and that while they were there for the annual review in April, ROP staff showed them how they were changing organization of files and had designated one person to set up the files so all documentation was readily available. She stated that she has been working with ROP for seven years; she does not have problems with them and they are cooperative, responsive and make corrections in a timely manner. She is planning on making a return visit to follow up on the plan of correction.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT CLEARANCES:

Indian Health Services, which is a branch of the US Navy, conducts annual inspections. Because the facility is located on federal land, a federal agency does the inspection rather than the Nevada State Health Department. Indian Health Services inspects the kitchen, food service, living units, lighting, vocational buildings and septic system to insure that OSHA standards are met. Staff has indicated that the entire facility is inspected.

ROP sends in a water sample monthly for ecoli and coliform.

Records are kept on file and the facility is in compliance at this time.

ADMINISTRATION AND PLAN OF OPERATION REVIEW:

Chief Executive Officer is Lawrence Howell; Program Administrator is Mike DeBusk; and Director of Student Services is Chris Ellison.

ROP holds a valid license for the Silver Star and Minden House facilities. There are no issues related to intake procedures, operating outside of licensing capacity, health and safety, staffing ratios and personal rights.

PROGRAM REVIEW AND CHANGES:

ROP continues to specialize in working with adjudicated boys, ages 13 through 17 years, who are wards of the court and who have a history of juvenile offenses and gang involvement. Behaviors/characteristics that are not acceptable are outlined in the annual visit of 2004. Admissions and intake remain the same. The Treatment Review Team reviews a potential student's characteristics and behaviors if there is a question, (e.g. repeated sexual acting out, homicide, psychosis diagnosed by a psychiatrist) and an exception is made by that team to allow admission of an individual who otherwise may not be appropriate for the program.

ROP does accept children who have problems with substance abuse, gang affiliation, anger management, impulse control, parenting/life management, and conduct disorder. ROP uses Positive Peer Culture which is a behavior management component that helps students to accept feedback regarding negative or unacceptable behavior and to make positive changes, teach respect and tolerance. Giving and receiving feedback is essential in this program. Confrontation is a civilized, non-aggressive way of addressing a peer's negative or inappropriate behavior. If a student perceives negative behaviors in others he may have an easier time of seeing his own. Confrontation and peer feedback may also teach a person that saying no in the real world is acceptable, and often preferential. The program strives to develop a sense of belonging in each student and the goal is for the student to learn appropriate behaviors and responses so that he will be productive and successful once he is living on his own.

ROP has four levels. The program builds on individual achievements. It offers vocational skills, educational advancement, sports, and life skills, graduation plans, and follow-up after graduation. There is a separately funded scholarship program for students. If a student qualifies, this fund may pay his college tuition. The athletic program is extensive, and daily physical education classes are very structured. When students are ready to leave the program, they are expected to be committed to a branch of the "EEE" which stands for education, be enrolled in school, usually college; enlist; or have employment in place.

The four status levels are:

Rookie- the entry level. Students are involved in intake and orientation, and are on opposite daily schedules from other students on higher levels. A Rookie may not confront others to suggest or guide (give feedback) but can receive feedback. There are three force fields within each level. If a student is in the red force field he is making no effort and is not participating and working on treatment issues. If a student is in the yellow force field he is getting things done, but is not actually living up to standards and is not making enough effort. If a student is in the green force field he is working hard, meeting and going beyond expectations, and accepting confrontations from students on higher levels.

Intern-a student may reach this level after getting necessary credits as a Rookie, and after having four green force fields (four weeks) in a five week period. As an intern, one has more privileges and is held to a higher standard. One can give feedback at this level.

Force fields are the same as a Rookie. If a student is in the green force field, he is doing everything he can to confront his own issues. Students tell their life stories at this level, and participate in guided meetings every day. Students self-report what they have done “wrong.”

RAMS-stands for respect, attitude, motivation, spirit. This level is usually attained by having four weeks as an intern in the green force field in a five week period, and no red force fields. It is important to hold RAMS status, to participate in vocational pursuits, athletics, life skills, to have an individual graduation plan, and to demonstrate positive behavior. Placing agencies want to see more than behavior changes. They want to see the resident head towards one of the “Es.” As a RAMS the student has more privileges, and can go off campus to participate in activities like community service.

Block R-this is the highest level, and very few students attain this status. Students on Block R run the RAMS meetings, which take place twice a week. Students have free campus movement, and they are considered student body officers. Block R students sit in on staff meetings to represent the student population.

Operation Validate: part of the ROP program where students learn competencies in eight areas. Each area begins with a letter from the word validate. (Information taken from ROP flyer)

V-vocational training: Includes computers, manufacturing, EMT/first responder, automotive technology, construction, facility maintenance, culinary arts, welding.

A-athletics: Students participate in the Nevada Interscholastic Athletic Association with other Nevada AAA Division high schools. Students in graduation houses may experience skiing, cycling, triathlons and rock climbing.

L-lifeskills: These courses focus on drug and alcohol abuse, anger management, victim empathy, hygiene, money management. Students can also participate in community service.

I-individual graduation plan: Plans are developed in conjunction with parents and placing agency. Plan outlines treatment, educational and behavioral goals that the student must meet after graduating from the program.

D-demonstrated behavioral changes: Changes are demonstrated by students making the transition from incorrigible to goal-oriented, with manners and respect for others. Students help each other develop a positive peer culture, where social growth is established. Through positive reinforcement students learn a lifestyle based on respect, pro-social behavior and positive self-worth.

A-aftercare: Progress of each graduate is followed and ROP staff assist students with their transition. Scheduled parent meetings help parents with skills in communication and rule-making; ROP gives parents a handbook for guidance.

T-treatment: Treatment issues are discussed in guided group meetings as well as in individual counseling; goals and objectives, strategies and timelines are developed.

E-education. ROP has a year-round school program on the site where students attend classes 25-40 hours per week. Students can earn a high school diploma or GED.

The Concerns program is the alternative program where a student spends time if he cannot mainstream with the rest of the population. If a student does not function in the regular on-ground school, is disruptive and refuses to do school work, he is sent to Concerns. While in the Concerns room, you may do an educational assignment, exercise, or sit. Ratio averages one adult to three students. Students can leave Concerns when they decide to change their behavior.

Since initial certification ROP has made some changes. They have purchased an additional piece of property which is adjacent to the site. The "run" course is on this property. ROP plans to develop this property to include boarding horses and a horse program for the students. They plan to build equestrian stalls and will develop an equestrian rescue program for the community.

There are plans to add landscaping to the vocations program and Douglas County has provided training to care for the Douglas County Park. ROP also is considering adding a 4H option to the program.

The Concerns Program is in Freedom Hall. Legend Hall is being renovated to house 24 students.

EMERGENCY INTERVENTION PLAN/INCIDENT REPORTS:

ROP continues to use JIREH Consulting and Training, Crisis Prevention and Intervention. JIREH provides training in how to safely and effectively prevent and manage aggressive, self-destructive, or disruptive behavior. Participants will gain confidence to bring potentially threatening behaviors under control. Emphasis is placed on prevention and de-escalation while maintaining safety and security. Techniques allow for the student to safely calm down and regain control while allowing for the preservation of the student's and staff's dignity. JIREH training teaches prevention, intervention, de-escalation, restoration and safe control, and staff learns least restrictive interventions and restraint techniques.

Incident reports are submitted to Community Care Licensing (CCL) in a timely manner. Several incident reports were reviewed prior to this visit, and there are no concerns with the reporting process.

PERSONNEL AND CLIENT FILE REVIEW:

Sixteen students' files were reviewed. Files are complete and contain preplacement information, admission information, needs and services plans, progress reports, physical and TB, personal rights, safeguards for personal property, medication information, court reports, consent forms, emergency information, medical and dental information, and discharge plans.

Ten staff files were reviewed. Files are complete and contain emergency information, fingerprint clearances, health screening, mandated reporting information, first aid, and statement regarding criminal record.

A staff person may begin working before the fingerprint process is completed. If the staff person signs a statement that indicates there has been an arrest or conviction, the Tribe can obtain an immediate background check and if the Tribe so decides, can grant a waiver to allow the person to work before the clearance is received.

CLIENTS AND PERSONAL RIGHTS REVIEW:

Upon admission, the student is informed of his personal rights, expectations, program structure, goals and philosophy.

Eight California students were interviewed. Students appeared to understand the program, procedures, levels, consequences, standards, goals, education, vocations, personal rights, peer interaction and the importance of giving and receiving feedback. Students are allowed to make and receive phone calls and send and receive mail on all levels, and privileges are increased as the student moves up through the program. Students stated that they were involved in sports, vocational pursuits and education. There were no complaints about the exercise program and the students indicated that they are expected to participate and to do what they are physically able to do. They understand the level system, and the importance of following rules and making positive choices. Students indicated that they thought that they were doing well in the program and felt optimistic about their success and ability to live on their own.

Six staff were interviewed. Staff are qualified, trained and understand the program and philosophy of the agency. Administrative staff appear to be very committed to the program and to the success of the students. There is extensive communication among administrative staff.

MEDICAL, DENTAL, AND NUTRITIONAL FOLLOW-UP SERVICES:

Medical and dental visits were documented. There is no longer an on-site medical clinic with a family nurse practitioner as administrator. ROP is using community based clinics such as the South Lion Medical Center, and the Paiute Tribal Clinic. They also use dentists in nearby towns. Staff who have had EMT training are on duty 24 hours a day.

In case of a medical emergency, a child is taken to the doctor or an ambulance is called.

TREATMENT SERVICES (COUNSELING, GROUPS, THERAPY):

ROP employs a psychologist who provides guidance for treatment, and they use a psychiatrist in Carson, Nevada. ROP provides therapy in the areas of individual and group counseling. There are several group therapy sessions each week. Peer interaction is a large part of therapy.

The treatment curriculum includes four modules which address treatment in substance abuse, gang affiliation, anger management, impulse control, relationships and communication, and parenting/life management.

STAFF ORIENTATION AND TRAINING HOURS:

Staff training is extensive. New staff receive 40 hours of initial training and all staff has at least 40 hours of annual training. Training is provided from outside sources; for example, a person with expertise in gang affiliation provided training recently. Staff are trained in emergency intervention, first aid and CPR. There is training in all scopes of the program including housekeeping and nutrition.

SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION REVIEW:

Certification review covered the following: student and staff file review, interviews, intake and discharge procedures, discipline policy, emergency intervention, medical procedures, observation of program and daily activities, fire clearance, disaster plan, food service, training, and all issues pertaining to physical plant, personal rights and safety.

OUT-OF-STATE CERTIFICATION FINDINGS:

No violations were observed during this visit.

CERTIFICATION DECISION:

In August, 2004, issues of concern by the Out-of-State Certification Team were searches of students conducted by staff after a home visit, construction site accessible to students, fire drills not conducted on a consistent basis, and fire clearance not completed as facility had not installed an additional water tank.

A plan of correction was submitted to the Team in October, 2004, which addressed each issue. A policy and procedure was developed regarding student searches and drug testing. Pictures were submitted showing construction was completed. Disaster drills are conducted at least twice a year, and a disaster policy and procedure was submitted. The facility had a second fire clearance inspection, and an additional water tank is not necessary and will not be until the new property is developed.

Recommend that recertification be granted.